

Dunmore's War

By Irene B. Brand

IT WAS an hour before daybreak, and a quiet, misty haze spread like an umbrella over the wooded point where two rivers met. The smaller river, the Kanawha, flowed northward and merged with the deeper, southern-bound Ohio River to the west. The water level was at a low ebb, and the placid Ohio resembled a lake more than a river.¹

October's rusty foliage on the abundant trees lining the river banks served as a protecting covering for the sleeping soldiers of Colonel Andrew Lewis's army, who were resting after a month's journey from east of the Allegheny Mountains. As the eastern sky lightened, two men bestirred themselves from their warm blankets and moved away from the silent camp into the denser forest to the north.

Suddenly the hush of the morning was broken by gunfire. The peaceful point between the rivers became a hell upon earth while soldiers rushed to defend themselves from attacking Indians.

The beauty of autumn was ignored amid the tumult of Indian yells, orders from colonial officials, and the sharp, staccato roar of muzzle-loading rifles. Indians lined the river banks and chanted, "Drive the White Dogs in." By full daylight Indians and Virginians were engaged in hand-to-hand combat as they clashed in the most important battle of Dunmore's War.

Sometimes called Cresap's War or the War of 1774, this series of hostilities between the Virginians and the western Indians was named for Lord Dunmore, Royal Governor of Virginia and the highest ranking official in the conflict. A short, sturdy man, Dunmore was an exception among other colonial governors because he actively led militiamen to fight against the Indians.

A native of Scotland, Dunmore was born in 1732. He succeeded to the earldom when he was 24. Fourteen years later he was appointed governor of New York, and in 1772 he came to Virginia as that colony's last colonial governor.

¹ Virgil A. Lewis, *History of the Battle of Point Pleasant* (Charleston, West Virginia, 1900), 17.

Though frequently in dispute with members of the House of Burgesses concerning their revolutionary sentiments, Dunmore remained on good terms with the colonists. This harmonious relationship was fostered by a common interest in the settlement of western lands which Dunmore shared with George Washington, Andrew Lewis, and other prominent Virginians.

Dunmore was forced to leave Virginia when he chose to champion the cause of George III in the colonists' struggle for independence; therefore, the most popular event of his governorship was his strong defense of the frontier in 1774. During that campaign, he not only commanded one division of the army, but also shared the hardship of the common soldier by marching on foot and carrying his own knapsack.

Sharing Dunmore's command in the war was Colonel Andrew Lewis, a reserved man of Irish descent who was a veteran of many border campaigns, including the French and Indian War. At the time of Dunmore's War, Lewis was a resident of Botetourt County in Southwest Virginia.

Lewis represented his county in the House of Burgesses. He was also the county lieutenant, main officer of the local militia, and in that capacity he was somewhat unpopular because of the strict discipline he imposed on his soldiers. A tall, dark-featured man, Lewis was once described as, "a genius of the forest, and the very ground trembles under him as he walks along."² When increased Indian warfare in 1774 indicated that a struggle was unavoidable, Dunmore instructed Lewis to call out the militia in his section of Virginia.

Leadership of the Indians against whom Lewis would lead his troops was delegated to a tall Shawnee orator, *Keigh-tugh-qua*, nicknamed Chief Cornstalk by the whites. This title had been derived from his Indian name which signified a stalk of the maize plant.

The Virginians had been aware of Cornstalk since 1769, when he led his marauding braves as far east as the Greenbrier River Valley. He had also been a notable warrior during Pontiac's Con-

² John G. Morgan, "A Point in History, the Battle of Point Pleasant," *The Charleston Courier*, 1873, 1. This volume is a reprint of a series of articles which appeared in *The Courier* in 1874.

spiracy in 1763, but for the next ten years his activities were unknown.

In the spring of 1774 when the Indians were planning war against the whites, Cornstalk appeared as an advocate for peace. But when his people decided upon aggression, he led them in an attack on Lewis's army encamped at Point Pleasant, a wooded area near the confluence of the Ohio and the Great Kanawha rivers. That battle, October 10, 1774, was the major engagement of Dunmore's War.

Events leading up to the battle originated in the French and Indian War. By the Treaty of Paris, 1763, the French ceded the British all claim to trans-Allegheny America. But the British still had to contend with a vast number of belligerent Indians living within that conquered territory.

At the beginning of the French and Indian War, the British had been stunned when the western tribes joined their enemies. When they realized that British land policy had antagonized the Indians, government officials planned for a just supervision of Indian affairs in the future. Knowing that it would be disastrous to accompany a French defeat by further encroachment on Indian lands, the British determined that unregulated westward expansion would be stopped.³

When the conflict with the French ended after almost eight years of fighting, the British longed for peace; therefore, their officials adopted a conciliatory policy toward the Indians. But though the Indians were appeased, the arrangement was wholly unsatisfactory to the land-hungry colonists.

The desire for fertile land in the Ohio Valley was one incentive which prompted residents of Pennsylvania and Virginia to join the fight against the French. For this reason frontiersmen were angry when they learned the Treaty of Easton stipulated that Pennsylvania west of the Alleghenies would remain Indian hunting ground and thus be closed to white settlement.

The Treaty of Easton was concluded in 1758 between the Six Nations and Sir William Johnson, who acted on behalf of the

³ Olin E. Ross, *The Allegheny Frontier, West Virginia Beginnings, 1730-1830*, (Lexington, Kentucky, 1970), 25-61.

proprietors of Pennsylvania. Colonel Henry Bouquet, commandant at Fort Pitt, upheld the settlement line, and three years later extended its provisions to include the trans-Allegheny areas of Maryland and Virginia.

The land speculators ignored these treaties, however, and continued to survey west of the mountains. In an effort to halt the invasion of more settlers, Pontiac, an Ottawa chieftain, led western Indians to ravage the frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania in 1763. Due to these attacks, the British government issued a proclamation absolutely forbidding its citizens to settle west of the Alleghenies. Not only were the colonists forbidden to hunt or to settle in that region, but the soldiers were commanded to arrest any British subject who broke the rule.⁴

Though favorable to the Indians, the arrangement was bitter for them. Once the undisputed owners of the area, they had become dependents of a foreign power.

The Indians were forced to accept British agents and troops into their borders. Though the soldiers were supposedly there for the protection of the Indians and to keep settlers from breaking the treaty, the Indians feared the troops would be scant security if the British wanted to change their minds. And change their minds they did, but the provisions of the proclamation did keep settlers out of the trans-Allegheny for six years.

The lack of settlement did not mean the colonists were satisfied with the arrangements, however, for they kept petitioning the British government to extend the settlement line. Consequently, two treaties were negotiated to allow British settlement from the North Carolina-Virginia border to a point near Long Island on the Holston River, then in a straight line to the mouth of the Great Kanawha River.⁵

By the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, 1768, and the Treaty of Lochaber two years later, the Six Nations and the Cherokees relinquished all claims to that area. But on the other hand, the treaties did nothing to settle the disputes with the western Indians who

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. vii, 54-55.

⁵ *Documentary History of Dunmore's War 1774*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Follen Killion (Madison, Wisconsin, 1905), 1. Reprinted by C. J. Carter Company, Birmingham, Virginia, 1874. The Holston River flows through northeastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia in the vicinity of Kingsport and Knoxville, Tennessee.

contended that the Six Nations and the Cherokees had no right to sell the land.

Regardless of the question concerning ownership, thousands of settlers moved into the trans-Allegheny region. Settlements were established around the forks of the Ohio and along the valleys of the Holston, Watauga, Greenbrier, and Monongahela. And land speculators sent surveyors into the uninhabited area along the Ohio River.

These land speculators found a champion in Lord Dunmore. Upon his arrival in Virginia he became infected with speculative fever, and his four years as governor were marked by increased expansionist activity. This westward expansion was one of the major causes of Dunmore's War.⁶

The greatest demand for western settlement was voiced by soldiers who had been promised land to pay for their services in the French and Indian War. And with Dunmore's support many veterans were granted substantial holdings along western rivers, the Coal, Pocatalico, Great Kanawha, Little Kanawha, Big Sandy, and Ohio.

This cession of western lands intensified disagreements between the Virginians and the Pennsylvanians who were in constant conflict over their borders. The land around the forks of the Ohio was a particular source of contention between the two colonies.

In 1774 Dunmore sent Dr. John Connolly to Fort Pitt, the stockade at the source of the Ohio River. Though he had received medical training in his youth, Connolly was more interested in western lands than in the medical profession. An intelligent man, he was also considered to be unscrupulous, dangerous, and full of intrigue. He was accused of fermenting the boundary dispute between Virginia and Pennsylvania and of bringing on the border troubles with the Indians.⁷

Connolly first met Dunmore when the governor visited western Virginia in the summer of 1773. As Dunmore's agent, Connolly was ordered to take possession of the Monongahela region around Fort Pitt in the name of the King of England and to raise a militia there. Connolly was arrested by the Pennsylvania authorities, but

⁶ *Enc. op. cit.*, 75.

⁷ *Enc. op. cit.*, 72-73; *Thwaites and Kellogg, op. cit.*, 42.

when he was released, he gathered a group of men and took control of the fort which he renamed Fort Dunmore.

The Indians took advantage of the quarrels between colonial officials. Soon after Connolly's action, a Pennsylvania trader on his way to the Shawnee towns in Ohio was attacked by Indians, who killed two of his men.

Connolly immediately issued a proclamation warning settlers along the Ohio that the Shawnees were not to be trusted. And because the Indians had declared hostile intentions toward the whites, Connolly ordered the Virginians to arm themselves and to punish the Indians for any act of aggression.⁵

This warning caused panic among the settlers, and hundreds of people began to retreat from the Monongahela Valley. In southwest Virginia the frontiersmen rapidly deserted their farms, until the valleys of the Clinch and Holston were almost abandoned.

When Connolly's circular reached Wheeling, a new settlement along the Ohio River, the inhabitants were fired with eagerness to attack the enemy towns to the west. A man with considerable experience in Indian affairs, Captain Michael Cresap, was petitioned to lead them. Though Cresap counseled for peace, he led the settlers in two attacks on small parties of Indians.

And though there were several minor encounters between the whites and the Indians during the spring of 1774, the event which triggered the long-expected war was the murder of several relatives of Logan, a Mingo chieftain. Logan blamed Captain Cresap for the death of his family, thus the war is sometimes called Cresap's War. But Cresap was not present at Yellow Creek when the slaughter occurred.

Yellow Creek, a stream flowing into the Ohio River from the west fifty miles south of Fort Dunmore, was the site of an encampment occupied by a small group of Indians. Across the river a party of whites was encamped. The Indians, five men, one woman, and her child, came to the settlers' camp. Rum was offered to the Indians, and three of them became intoxicated, though the other two men and the woman refused to drink.

⁵ *Thwaites and Kallegas, op. cit., Introduction, xiii.*

The sober Indians were challenged to some target shooting, and when their guns were empty, the whites shot them. When the woman tried to escape, she was killed also, and the three drunken Indians were tomahawked. The child, the son of a white trader, was taken to his father.⁹

The woman was Logan's sister, and one of the men was his brother; therefore, Logan retaliated immediately. He declared that he would fight until he had taken ten lives for each one of his family members. His grievances were communicated in a note found tied to a war club in the cabin of a settler on the Holston River.

Captain Cresap:

What did you kill my people on Yellow Creek for? The white people killed my kin at Conestoga, a little while ago, and I thought nothing of that. But you killed my kin again on Yellow Creek, and they took my cousin prisoner. Then I thought I must kill too; and I have been three times to war since; but the Indians are not angry, only myself.¹⁰

July 21, 1774 (signed) Captain John Logan

Because of the increased Indian attacks, the Virginians prepared for war. Several new forts were built along the frontier. And the governor was petitioned for troops to wage an offensive war against the Indians.

Governor Dunmore took immediate action to protect the frontier. He appointed Andrew Lewis as commander-in-chief of a force to be recruited from Virginia's western counties. Lewis's men were ordered to proceed to the mouth of the Great Kanawha River. After building a fort there, the militiamen were to cross the Ohio River to destroy the Indians' villages.¹¹

In the meantime, Dunmore planned to travel to the forks of the Ohio where he would raise another regiment. His force would then travel southward along the Ohio River for a meeting with Lewis's men, probably at the mouth of the Great Kanawha. Dunmore wrote the county lieutenants, "That the country may be convinced of my resolution not to neglect anything in my power to serve it, I shall, at my own risk endeavor to furnish you with powder and ball."¹²

⁹ *Thornton and Keltz*, op. cit., 9-14.

¹⁰ *Wills, Dr. Hays, History of the Early Settlement and Indian Wars of Western Virginia* (Philadelphia, 1871), 146.

¹¹ *Thornton and Keltz*, op. cit., 48, 97-98.

¹² *Thornton and Keltz*, op. cit., 35.

Recruiting started immediately, and by the first part of September, Lewis's army assembled at Camp Union on the Greenbrier River, near present-day Lewisburg, West Virginia. First to arrive at the camp were men from Augusta County under the command of Charles Lewis, a younger brother of Andrew. A favorite with the men, Charles Lewis was a brave officer who had served in the French and Indian War.

Commanding men from Botetourt County was a skillful surgeon, Colonel William Fleming. He had also served in the French and Indian War as a surgeon in Washington's regiment. Later he had commanded several frontier forts, and as colonel of the Botetourt militia, he became its commander when Andrew Lewis, the county-lieutenant, was given command of the whole division.¹³

Independent companies were led by Captain Evan Shelby, Captain William Russell, and Colonel John Field.

Colonel William Christian's men from Fincastle County raised the army's number to approximately 1,500 men. Because they only arrived at Camp Union the evening before the army began to march, Christian's troops were left behind for a few days to provide for transporting extra baggage and supplies.¹⁴

The soldiers at Camp Union were a remarkable group of men. Many were veterans of the French and Indian War or of other border warfare. Both officers and men were dressed in fringed hunting shirts dyed bright hues of yellow, brown, and red. Long woolen leggings, caps, and moccasins completed their "uniforms."¹⁵

Their weapons consisted of a gun, usually an English-type musket or long rifle, a tomahawk, and a scalping knife. Shot bags and powder horns hung from their belts.

By most standards, it was an undisciplined army, for the militiamen had lived too long upon the frontier sustained by their own ingenuity to take orders meekly. But they shared one goal. They wanted to rid their western borders of the Indian menace, and if it took a war to do it, they were ready to fight.

¹³ Lewis, *op. cit.*, 30-32.

¹⁴ Lewis, *op. cit.*, 32; Towles and Kellogg, *op. cit.*, 185-188.

¹⁵ Lewis, *op. cit.*, 28; Morgan, *op. cit.*, 11.

On September 6, Charles Lewis left Camp Union with 600 men. They took with them 108 head of beef cattle and 500 pack horses carrying 54,000 pounds of flour.¹⁶

The soldiers built their own road as they advanced for more than 100 miles up and down the Allegheny Mountains. But though the line of march was over rough terrain, there was a minimum of delay, and within 21 days the group reached the Elk River, near present-day Charleston, West Virginia. There they halted and built canoes to transport their supplies to the Ohio River. By the time the canoes were completed, the rest of the army, except Christian's men, had arrived.

During the time of preparation for war, Andrew Lewis received conflicting orders from Dunmore. On July 24 the militia had been ordered to fortify the Great Kanawha River, then to proceed into Indian territory. But two weeks later Dunmore directed Lewis to meet him at the Little Kanawha River, near present-day Parkersburg, West Virginia. Lewis, however, chose to follow the first orders from Dunmore.¹⁷

Lewis's army broke camp at the Elk River, October 2. During the five-day march along the northern bank of the Kanawha River, the militiamen were under observation by Indians. Scouts moved ahead of the main division to warn of probable danger.

The Virginians reached the Ohio at present-day Point Pleasant, West Virginia, October 6, where they expected Dunmore to be waiting. They found instead that the governor had changed his plans again. A note delivered to Lewis ordered the militiamen to join Dunmore at the Hockhocking (now Hocking) River.

Lewis and his men were in no mood to comply immediately with Dunmore's orders. The appointed place, 40 miles upstream, was a long way for the weary men and animals to travel. And it seemed useless to march that many miles out of the way from the Indian towns.

But of more concern than their personal comfort, the Virginians did not want to leave the mouth of the Kanawha undefended, since it was a route which the Shawnees often used on their excursions

¹⁶ Lewis, *op. cit.*, 31.

¹⁷ *Encyclopedia of Virginia*, *op. cit.*, 66-67, 93-94, 170-191.

to attack settlements east of the Alleghenies. And since it would be several days before Colonel Christian could arrive with additional provisions, Lewis notified Dunmore that he would not leave that area for a few days.¹⁸

Dunmore did not give any reasons for changing his orders to Lewis. A great many events had occurred since the governor left Williamsburg, however, which may have caused him to alter his original plans to destroy the Indians.

One of these events had transpired prior to Dunmore's arrival in the north when 400 men commanded by Colonel Angus McDonald had moved against the Indians. A resident of Winchester, Virginia, McDonald had traveled west early in 1774 to survey lands granted to veterans of the French and Indian War. Because McDonald and his party were harassed by hostile Indians, they returned to Wheeling. When Dunmore learned of the Indians's actions, he ordered McDonald to recruit some troops and march against the Indian town, Wappatomica, sometimes spelled Wakatomica, on the Muskingum River, near present-day Coshocton, Ohio.

McDonald's men and the Indians played hide-and-seek for several days in some minor skirmishes. Finally the Indians asked for a truce, but suspicious of their sincerity, McDonald destroyed some Indian property before his men withdrew from enemy territory.¹⁹

In his report to Connolly, McDonald said, "I destroyed their corn fields, burnt their cabins, took three scalps, and made one prisoner; I had two men killed and six wounded."²⁰ But the expedition had little effect on the Indians, for they continued their attacks on settlements along the tributaries of the Ohio and the Monongahela rivers.

After returning from the attack on the Indian towns, McDonald's men joined the army Dunmore was recruiting in which Colonel William Crawford commanded a Frederick County regiment of 500 men. Almost that many militiamen enlisted from Berkeley County under the leadership of Colonel Adam Stephen.

These northern recruits gathered near Greenway Court where Dunmore was a guest of Lord Fairfax. From there they marched

¹⁸ Morgan, *op. cit.*, 12.

¹⁹ Thornton and Rathbone, *op. cit.*, 122 (footnote).

²⁰ Thornton and Rathbone, *op. cit.*, 122.

along Braddock's Road toward the frontier, but the two regiments separated at Redstone Creek on the Monongahela River. Stephen's men traveled toward Wheeling with the supplies, while Dunmore marched the other regiment to Fort Dunmore. There Major Connolly and 200 more men joined the army boosting Dunmore's division to about 1200 soldiers, which was somewhat less than the number in Lewis's army. The two divisions numbered more than 2,700 men, however, most of whom had been recruited west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

While he was at the fort, the Virginia governor received overtures of peace from the Indians, and a conference was arranged with them. The main spokesman for the Indians was White Eyes, a Delaware chief who was friendly to the British. But conspicuous by his absence was Cornstalk, chief of the Shawnees, and though Dunmore pledged friendship with the peaceful Indians, little was accomplished because of the absence of the warlike tribes.

Undeterred by the Indians' peace offers, Dunmore and his army moved southward along the Ohio in two divisions—one by land, the other by boat. They halted when they reached the Hockhocking River, an Ohio tributary about 40 miles north of the Great Kanawha River. At that site the soldiers erected a stockade which they named Fort Gower to honor Dunmore's friend, the Earl of Gower. There Dunmore waited hoping that Cornstalk would approach him for peace talks, but no messages arrived from the Shawnee.

Cornstalk at that time was busy with plans of his own. Aware of the approach of the two armies, the chieftains of the northwestern tribes made plans to meet the invasion. Though by nature a militant man, Cornstalk suggested that his people should make peace. He said it was impossible to defeat the Virginians.

When the Indians decided to fight, however, Cornstalk agreed to lead them against their attackers. "As you are determined to fight, you shall fight," he told them.¹ Once this decision was made, the Indians took immediate action for they wanted to prevent the joining of the two divisions of the army. If they destroyed Lewis's army, they could then turn upon Dunmore's men.

Lewis was unaware that on the night of October 9 almost 1,000 Indians crossed the Ohio River on rafts. They camped about

¹ *The Men, op. cit.*, 142.

five miles from the wooded area where Lewis's army was sleeping. Though most of the Indians were Shawnees, there were some Mingos, Delawares, Wyandots, and Ottawas.

It was only by accident that the Virginians learned the Indians were nearby. Shortly after daybreak on October 10, two soldiers were going hunting when they saw a large group of Indians coming through the woods about three miles from the frontiersmen's encampment.²²

One of the soldiers was killed immediately by the Indians, but the other managed to return and alarm the army. Preparations were made to fight, although Lewis thought the Indians were only a scouting party.²³

The militiamen's camp was located in a vulnerable spot. The Ohio River flowed on the west side of the area, the Kanawha River formed a southern boundary, and along the eastern side was a small stream, Crooked Creek. With the Indians advancing from the north, retreat was impossible.

Soon after sunrise the Virginians moved to meet the Indians. Commander Lewis ordered his brother, Charles, to lead 150 Augusta troops from the Kanawha River side of the camp to meet the enemy along the edge of Crooked Creek. At the same time Colonel Fleming moved along the Ohio River with an equal number of Botetourt men.

About a mile from camp, Charles Lewis's troops encountered the Indians, and Lewis suffered a fatal wound. Because of the overwhelming number of Indians, the militiamen were forced to retreat.²⁴

When the Botetourt men launched their attack, Colonel Fleming was severely wounded, but the enemy advance was halted. As soon as the retreating Augusta troops were reinforced by Colonel Field and his company as well as some men from the Augusta and Botetourt divisions, the Indians were unable to hold the ground they had gained. Eventually the frontiersmen pushed the enemy back to the line which Fleming's troops were holding along the Ohio.

²² Lewis, *op. cit.*, 41-42.

²³ Davidson and Keltie, *op. cit.*, 286.

²⁴ Davidson and Keltie, *op. cit.*, 286-277.

By midmorning a barrier of fallen trees stretched from the Ohio to the Kanawha, and the Virginians used this protection as they resorted to Indian-style fighting. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting was common as the combatants attacked with knives and tomahawks. The battle lines extended about a mile through the woods, and in many places as close as six yards, and never more than 20 yards apart.²⁵

According to an eye-witness, at the height of the five-hour battle, the noise and confusion was terrifying:

The noise of the firing was tremendous. No single gun could be distinguished, but it was one constant roar. The rifle and tomahawk now did their work with dreadful certainty (sic) . . . The shouting of the whites, the continual roar of firearms, the war-whoop and dismal yelling of the Indians . . . became by mixture and combination highly discordant and terrific. Add to this the constant succession of dead and wounded brought off from the battlefield.²⁶

The Indians' morale was high as they shouted insults at the Virginians. On the opposite side of the rivers, other Indians waited to club or to tomahawk any soldier who tried to escape from the battlefield.

The presence of Cornstalk was evident during the whole battle. Above the noise of the conflict his voice urged, "Be strong. Lie low. Shoot well."²⁷

Shortly after noon the fighting subsided. When it was obvious that his warriors could not force the Virginians from their position, Cornstalk ordered a retreat. This action coincided with a flanking move along Crooked Creek under the command of Captains John Stuart, George Matthews, and Isaac Shelby.

As the Indians moved northward, their withdrawal was concealed by the thick undergrowth in the forest. About two miles up the Ohio River they gathered their forces and urged the Virginians forward. Suspecting a trick, the frontiersmen halted their advance, and about sunset, firing ceased on both sides.

The militiamen expected another attack the next day, but during the night the Indians retreated across the Ohio. Colonel Fleming recorded in his journal, "I believe the Indians never had

²⁵ *Shelby*, op. cit., 12.

²⁶ *De Bow*, op. cit., 125.

²⁷ *Shelby and Matthews*, op. cit., 204.

such a scourging from the English before. They scalped many of their own dead to prevent their falling into our hands, buried numbers, threw many into the Ohio, and no doubt carried off many wounded."²⁸

The Virginians' loss was estimated at 46 killed, nine of whom were commissioned officers including Colonel Charles Lewis and Colonel John Field. Almost 100 men were wounded. Spoils of war taken by Lewis's men included 20 scalps, 80 blankets, 40 guns, and many tomahawks. Indian losses were judged to be more than 270, but there was no reliable record of their dead.

By midnight the arrival of Colonel Christian's regiment raised the morale of the weary soldiers. And the next morning when scouts reported that the enemy had withdrawn across the river, uneasiness among the troops was dissolved.

Although he was aware that the Indians were attacking Lewis, Dunmore did not go to the aid of the southern division. Instead, on October 11, the governor left Fort Gower and marched toward the Indian towns on Scippo Creek. His strategy was designed to place his army between the attacking Indians and their villages. The northern division had not marched far when news reached Dunmore of Lewis's victory at Point Pleasant.²⁹

On the third day after the battle, a messenger from Dunmore instructed Lewis to cross the Ohio into the Indians' territory. Dunmore would continue to march also, and the two divisions would join before they arrived at the Shawnee towns. It was a week, however, before the Virginians started toward the rendezvous with the governor.

When the northern division was about 15 miles from the Shawnee villages, located near the present town of Chillicothe, Ohio, Cornstalk sent a messenger to Dunmore indicating his desire to make peace. Thereupon the governor established a camp site which he christened Camp Charlotte to honor his wife and the Queen of England. He waited there for the Indians to arrive.

Cornstalk did not look like a defeated man when he approached the British camp. His stature was proud. His clothes were adorned

²⁸ *Diaries and Letters, 1763-1764*, 286.

²⁹ *Diaries and Letters, 1763-1764*, 284-285.

with decorative ornaments. His forcefulness and composure as he spoke at the conference caused his hearers to compare him to such orators as Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee. Though he sued for peace, he contended that the whites had been the sole cause of the war.³⁰

At the same time Lewis was moving toward the Shawnee villages with his militiamen. Dunmore feared the arrival of such a large force would disrupt the peace negotiations, and he ordered Lewis to halt his troops. Though Lewis and a few officers were invited to come to Camp Charlotte to make terms with the Shawnees, Lewis doubted that it was wise to move through Indian territory with only a few men; therefore, the whole army continued toward Dunmore's camp.³¹

As they marched, however, the troops took a wrong route which placed them between the negotiating Indians and the Shawnee towns. Immediately Cornstalk and his following left the peace talks and hastened to protect their homes. Disturbed by this development, Dunmore rode to Lewis's camp and ordered a retreat to Point Pleasant since the presence of the army was a hinderance to peace.

Lewis could hardly restrain his men from harming the governor, when they received orders to abandon the mission they had marched over 200 miles to accomplish. Many of them had been prompted to join the militia by the promise of horses and other booty to be found at the Indian villages. Thus it was a great disappointment to return home empty handed and without the destruction of the towns; nevertheless, Lewis and his men obeyed the orders.³²

As soon as the southern division withdrew, the Indians continued their peace negotiations. Chief Logan, however, refused to participate in the treaty, and Dunmore ordered an attack on one of Logan's villages, the only offensive action of the northern division during the war.

Major Crawford led an expedition of 250 men to the west bank of the Scioto River, now Columbus, Ohio, where they destroyed a Mingo town. Five Indians were killed, and 14 prisoners were

³⁰ *The Diary of Lewis and Clark*, 1804-1805.
³¹ *The Diary of Lewis and Clark*, 1804-1805.
³² *The Diary of Lewis and Clark*, 1804-1805.

taken, but the rest of the residents escaped.³³ Logan did not retaliate for this destruction, nor did he go to war against the whites at any future time.

Dunmore's treaty with the Indians was favorable to the British. The Indians promised to return all prisoners, horses, and other possessions they had taken from the settlers. They agreed to cease hunting on the eastern side of the Ohio. Boats traveling on the Ohio River would not be molested. Rules governing trade were to be set according to British regulations. And as a guarantee for obeying the treaty, the British took some Indian hostages.³⁴

Once the peace negotiations were concluded, both divisions of the army were disbanded, although a small garrison was stationed at the mouth of the Great Kanawha River. Dunmore was escorted back to Fort Gower by Cornstalk. There on November 5, some of the militiamen drafted a resolution which is sometimes called the first colonial declaration of independence.³⁵

The document stated that though the soldiers had been living in the woods for three months, their countrymen should not be jealous of their movements. They had not used their arms for any purpose except to honor America and Virginia.

The signers further declared their loyalty to the King of England as long as he reigned over a brave and free people, but they contended that their love of liberty outweighed all other considerations. The writers also noted their respect for Lord Dunmore, stating an opinion that the campaign had been undertaken for no purpose except the good of the whole country.

Because he had personally undertaken the task of protecting the frontier, Dunmore received additional acclaim. He was honored by the city of Williamsburg upon his return to Virginia, December 4. He received congratulations from the Governor's Council and the administration of the College of William and Mary. In April 1775, he was commended by the citizens of Fincastle County for his services in protecting their settlements from the Indians. But he was censured by British authorities because they considered his

³³ *Encyclopedia of Virginia*, 10: 303-304.

³⁴ *Encyclopedia of Virginia*, 10: 304.

³⁵ *The First Draft of the Declaration of Independence of the United States*, ed. Elizabeth C. Smith and Susan F. Swanson (Charlottesville, 1966), 78-80.

willful violation of British land policy the cause of the Indian trouble.³⁶

The peace terms agreed upon at Camp Charlotte were only temporary, for the governor expected to return to the frontier the following year to conclude a lasting peace with the Indians. Because of national events, Dunmore did not return to the west. But negotiations the next year did result in an agreement which kept the western Indians peaceful during the first two years of the War for Independence.

Upon the outbreak of the Revolution, relations between Dunmore and the colonials became strained. Dunmore remained loyal to Britain, and the governor waged warfare against his former friends. Thus in July 1776, an army of colonials led by Andrew Lewis forced Dunmore to leave Virginia. Soon thereafter Dunmore returned to Great Britain without any further involvement in colonial affairs.³⁷

Lewis, on the other hand, served Virginia in various capacities until his death near the end of the Revolutionary War. Their opponent, Cornstalk, remained a friend to the frontiersmen until he was treacherously killed by the whites in 1777 near the battleground where he had led his warriors three years before.

During those years Cornstalk had often visited the men who garrisoned the stockade at Point Pleasant. In the autumn of 1777 when he came to the fort, Cornstalk told the officers that the British were trying to get the northwestern Indians to join the fight against the colonists. While Cornstalk opposed an alliance with the British, he insinuated that the Shawnees would fight if the other tribes waged war.

To prevent the Shawnees from joining their enemies, the soldiers made hostages of Cornstalk and his two companions, Red Hawk and Old Yie. A short time later, Cornstalk's son, Ellinipsico, came to the fort to inquire about his father's welfare. The next day when a small party of Indians killed a soldier near the fort, the irate soldiers murdered the four hostages.³⁸

³⁶ Lewis, *op. cit.*, 26-27.

³⁷ Morgan, *op. cit.*, 20.

³⁸ Lewis, *op. cit.*, 225-226.

Because Dunmore's War occurred on the very eve of the Revolutionary War, the importance of this conflict is often overlooked. But with the cessation of Indian raids, large numbers of surveyors and settlers moved into Kentucky and to other parts of the frontier. There they established settlements whose inhabitants were largely responsible for American victories in the West during the struggle for independence.

In his history of the combat for independence in the West, Theodore Roosevelt said that Dunmore's War, "kept the northwestern tribes quiet for the first three years of the Revolutionary struggle; and above all it rendered possible the settlement of Kentucky, and therefore the winning of the west. Had it not been for Lord Dunmore's war, it is more than likely that when the colonies achieved their freedom, they would have found their western boundary fixed at the Allegheny Mountains."³⁹

Dunmore's War also provided valuable battle experience for the Virginians. Men in the armies of both Lewis and Dunmore later fought in the Revolution. The roster of soldiers serving in Dunmore's War listed many men who became famous in the fight for independence, such as George Rogers Clark, Daniel Morgan, William Campbell, and Isaac Shelby. Others became statesmen and government officials for the new nation. And a large majority of the men who became leaders on the American frontier had fought with Dunmore and Lewis.

Among those who achieved national importance was Isaac Shelby, a general in the Revolutionary War, who became the first governor of Kentucky. Both his father, Evan Shelby, and John Sevier served as governor of the temporary state of Franklin during its brief existence. Sevier later became the first governor of Tennessee.

George Matthews was twice governor of Georgia. William Fleming, who commanded the Botetourt division at the Battle of Point Pleasant, was Virginia state senator for two years and became the acting governor of Virginia in 1781.

Thomas Posey was appointed the third territorial governor of Indiana in 1812. John Steele served as governor of Mississippi;

James Woods, as governor of Virginia; and Thomas Burk as governor of North Carolina.

Not only did Dunmore's War foster qualities of military and political leadership among its participants, but the campaign gave the Virginians confidence in their strength and endurance. Though short of provisions and lacking in training, they had triumphed over a formidable enemy. This knowledge sustained them during the long struggle for American independence.